

## Idaho shows strong support for GNEP

Support for Idaho as a potential site for the Department of Energy's Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) project was abundant at the March 15 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) scoping meeting. Turnout was considerable. Approximately 650 people participated in the event, and 132 speakers shared their opinions. The number attending was roughly double in size of the next-largest GNEP scoping meeting prior to Idaho Falls.

Widespread support for the project was clear with approximately 95% of the speakers advocating the development of GNEP in Idaho or at Idaho National Laboratory. Throughout the evening, numerous private citizens and representatives of Idaho civic and business organizations provided compelling reasons why DOE should choose INL to participate in the project - including the lab's history, current mission and resources.

Political luminaries lined up to support GNEP. Spokesmen for the entire Idaho political delegation - all of Idaho's U.S. senators and congressmen, the governor, lieutenant governor, the state legislature, as well as 16 mayors and commissioners from 10 counties - stood up to read letters of support into the meeting record. The standing-room-only crowd included dozens of community leaders from counties surrounding INL.

Among the key political figures represented were Sen. Larry Craig, Sen. Mike Crapo, Rep. Mike Simpson, Rep. Bill Sali, Gov. Butch Otter and mayors from across the state who offered written appeals to DOE to include INL as a vital element of GNEP. This support followed closely on the heels of state legislation (Senate Joint Memorial 107) passed March 13 by both houses of the Idaho Legislature, expressing support for the project in Idaho. The newly adopted SJM107 measure will now be sent to Congress and the president of the United States for review.

Photo: Leatherman and Hafla

**Idaho Falls Mayor's Youth Advisory Council vice chair, Ian Leatherman, and chair, Caitlin Hafla, spoke in support of the project.**

GNEP will recycle spent nuclear fuel and destroy its long-lived radioactive components. To accomplish this, DOE proposes to design, build and operate three facilities. DOE is considering its Idaho National Laboratory as a potential site for one or more of the facilities: an advanced fuel cycle research facility that would perform research and development into spent nuclear fuel recycling processes and other advanced nuclear fuel cycles; a nuclear fuel recycling center that would separate spent nuclear fuel into reusable and waste components and then manufacture new nuclear fast reactor fuel using the reusable components; and an advanced recycling reactor that would destroy long-lived radioactive elements in the new fuel while generating electricity.

And DOE is considering the nearby town of Atomic City, Idaho, as a potential site for a nuclear fuel recycling center and/or an advanced recycling reactor. These Idaho sites are two of the 13 sites in eight states DOE is considering for the construction of the three different facilities.

After the public comment period, DOE contemplates that the PEIS will consider these 13 sites as possible locations for one or more of the proposed GNEP facilities. Eleven of the sites were selected based on responses received regarding the [Funding Opportunity Announcement](#), as well as two additional DOE sites that the Department has preliminarily identified as a possible location for a DOE-directed advanced fuel cycle research facility.

For a list of times and locations for all GNEP public scoping meetings, visit: <http://www.gnep.gov/PEIS/gnepPEIS.html#gnepScopingMeetings>.

Photo: Idaho mayors

**Idaho Falls Mayor Jared Fuhrman was surrounded by 16 other mayors from Idaho as he read a joint statement that favored a critical GNEP role for INL.**

[SJM107](#) articulates "the resolve of the State of Idaho to continue its nearly 60-year partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy and its predecessor agencies that has done and continues to do so much to advance the energy supply and security interests of the State of Idaho and these United States." In addition, SJM107 states, "More specifically, as the U.S. Department of Energy moves through its legally required process of conducting scoping hearings on newly proposed major research projects, such as the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, this memorial represents the Legislature's statement of support for this far-reaching nuclear research and management initiative and for the site evaluation process now under way that is studying the suitability of two Idaho locations, along with 11 others across the nation."

Photo: GNEP process

**GNEP is an evolving U.S. global nuclear strategy aimed at reducing global dependence on fossil fuels; providing reliable, abundant energy necessary for economic growth, prosperity and health; utilizing international expertise to advance technologies and safeguards; and reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation.**

For more information on GNEP, visit: <http://www.gnep.gov/>.

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